

When the Night was Full of Terrors

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Summary:

It was just a normal drive home from school in Richie's truck. But then one out-of-control semi changed it all.

Eddie doesn't know what to do.

When the Night was Full of Terrors

Author's Note:

Richie having a truck was absolutely inspired by @edsrich's "[Bruised](#)." It's now canon in my head that Richie only drives trucks. And maybe mustangs.

Lord Huron's song "[The Night We Met](#)" played on repeat while writing this, hence the title. Listen for maximum feels.

I'm also on Tumblr; feel free to come say hi. :)
reddieinthestars.tumblr.com.

Hope you enjoy. <3

The sound of glass shattering and metal shredding is something Eddie knows he'll never forget.

But more than that, he knows he'll never forget seeing Richie's eyes widen—glasses magnifying them until his whole face seemed to be only pupils—and then Richie's hand shooting out to grab Eddie's hand upon realizing they were going to crash.

It had been another boring day at Derry High. Eddie and Richie had walked together towards the parking lot after the last bell, Eddie not responding to Richie's typical yammering. They lived on the same side of town, so Eddie always carpooled with Richie. The other Losers usually rode with Bill or biked home.

"You okay, Eds? Haven't heard anyone this quiet since I finished your mom off last night."

"Oh my god, shut up! And don't call me that. You know I hate that!"

Okay, so Eddie hadn't responded for *most* of it.

The bickering continued until they reached the truck and climbed in.

Today was particularly cold, the air freezing the tip of Eddie's nose.

He'd worn a sweater under his coat along with gloves and a scarf, and he still shivered a bit. He glanced at Richie, who only had a long-sleeved shirt and light jacket on, and wondered how the other boy didn't develop frostbite—or even seem to really notice the cold, for that matter. Eddie sighed, rubbing his gloved hands together.

“Cold? Sorry, fucking heater always takes forever.” Richie smacked the air dial.

“I'm fine. Just drive.”

Eddie settled back into his seat. Though it took a while, the heater slowly permeated the truck's interior with warmth. Eddie's eyes fell half-closed, content before he glanced at Richie's face. The other boy's dark hair fell in lazy curls around his face and bounced as the truck traversed the bumps in the road. Eddie's eyes traced the profile of Richie's forehead, nose, and then

(pink, kissable)

lips, where his gaze seemed to stick.

Richie's face turned from the road to Eddie; Eddie looked away before Richie could notice what he'd been staring at.

“Comfy there, Eds?” Richie smirked as they pulled onto Main Street, noticing Eddie's slumped position, and his eyes sparkled with something that made a flush rise in Eddie's cheeks.

Eddie's mouth opened to respond, but before he could, a flash of silver caught his eye. He turned just in time to see a massive semi-truck veering into their lane as the speeding driver overcorrected and lost control.

Time seemed to stop for just a second before a screech ripped out of Eddie's mouth. “Richie, look out!”

“Holy fuck!” Richie tried to turn away from the oncoming vehicle, but there was nowhere to go. Parked cars lined their side of the street, so it was either face the silver blur barreling their way

(Hi-yo, Silver, awaaaaaay, holy fucking shit)

or hit another car. Richie caught side of Eddie's horrified face, and he snatched Eddie's hand in his. With his other hand, he yanked the steering wheel to the right, toward the parked cars.

Richie jammed the nose of the truck between two of the cars, simultaneously smashing a rear end and front end. Metal shrieked around them; both boys flew forward, Richie squawking as his nose broke against the steering wheel and Eddie smacking hard into the dashboard. He felt the pressure of the impact shudder through the old break in his arm

(Oh god, not again, please please please)

and he cried out.

But then came the real crash.

It was spectacular.

The out-of-control semi careened into the back end of Richie's truck, tearing it clean off with the force. Eddie screamed, the sound of tearing metal ripping through him like hundreds of torture victims howling in his ears. The impact jolted both Richie and Eddie farther into the front of the truck.

Eddie's arm had been stuck between his torso and the dashboard, and he felt the bone tensing tensing tensing—

Snap.

Tears sprang to his eyes as he felt his arm crack into an unnatural angle.

"Fuck!" He struggled to get off of his broken arm, but he couldn't. The rear end of the truck had caved in, metal pinning Eddie against the dashboard. "Richie?"

Nothing.

Eddie looked over to see Richie slumped over the steering wheel, unconscious. Blood had dripped from his nose and mouth, and the second impact had sent it out in a spray over Richie's shirt and the

dashboard.

“Richie? Richie!”

Fear like Eddie hadn’t known since the summer of 1989

(I’ll blow you for a dime. I’ll blow you for free!)

flooded through him. Eddie fought to move toward the other boy, but all his efforts did was send pain rushing through his arm and then the rest of his body. He felt dizzy, sick, darkness flickering at the edge of his vision. He chest felt like it was sinking in; he couldn’t breathe. His asthma may have been bullshit, but right now, it felt more real than anything.

He couldn’t breathe. *He couldn’t breathe.*

“Help!” he whisper-shouted, voice warbling. “Help! Help! My friend

(Just a friend, Edward? Can’t breathe. Can’t breathe.)

is hurt!”

He heard sirens—police? ambulance? —approaching.

“Richie...Richie....”

After what seemed like forever, emergency workers had freed Richie and Eddie from their metal cage. Richie remained unconscious the entire time.

Eddie was pulled out first, but he refused to allow the EMT to take him away from the remains of Richie’s truck. Not before Richie was freed. He watched the workers move around Richie’s limp form, careful not to hurt the unconscious boy even more.

Tears rolled down over the grime

(Grime. Blowjob for a dime. Even for free or overtime.)

on Eddie’s cheeks. How the fuck had this day gone so wrong in an

instant? One moment, Eddie had been considering the strange kissable qualities of Richie's lips, and the next...

Eventually, the workers lifted Richie's body away from the wreckage and settled him on a stretcher. Richie was by no means short, his growth spurt sending him to tower above the rest of the Losers, but he looked tiny on the stretcher, caked blood and bruises coating his slack face. Eddie's insides felt like ice at the sight.

"Come on, honey," the EMT next to him murmured. "Let's get you both to the hospital." She had an arm around him and gently prompted him to start moving toward the ambulance.

Eddie felt numb as he let the EMT lead him forward.

After setting and casting Eddie's re-broken arm, the doctors and nurses finally allowed him to see Richie.

"Head injuries can be unpredictable," the doctors had said. "We need to monitor the swelling

(like a balloon)

for now."

"He's going to wake up, right?" Eddie asked. "I mean, he's going to be fine, isn't he?"

The doctors had looked at each other and then at him with pursed lips and no answer.

Richie lay propped up in the hospital bed, oxygen feeding into his system through nose tubes. Dark bruises and discoloration decorated his face; his broken nose was splinted, flecks of blood still lingering around his nostrils. His eyes looked sunken in, skull-like. Black ringed his right eye where he had hit the steering wheel again after the second impact.

He looked an utter horror.

Eddie pulled a chair beside the bed and sat down. He winced as his own bruises flared at the movement.

“Richie,” he whispered.

Of course, there was no response. Watching the Trashmouth himself lay silent and hurt like this sent something cold and horrid

(dank sewer water splashing all over him, freezing him from the inside out)

spiraling through Eddie’s system.

“Wake up, you fucking idiot,” Eddie said, voice trembling. “Stop faking this. Come on.”

The sick sweet tang of antiseptic made Eddie feel a bit lightheaded as he leaned forward on the bed, taking Richie’s hand in his. Richie’s hand was bigger than his, fingers long and lanky like the boy’s body. Eddie rubbed his fingers over every knuckle and line in his friend’s hand before pulling it against his cheek.

Then the tears came.

Sobs tore through Eddie’s throat with such force that he vaguely wondered if he would ever breathe normally again. It wouldn’t matter. Without Richie, Eddie couldn’t breathe at all. Would never breathe again.

Eddie had known for a while that his feelings for his best friend had been morphing into something outside the bounds of platonic friendship. Every time Richie smiled at him, pinched his cheek, called him by those stupid nicknames, Eddie’s heart had seemed to grow three sizes, leaving Eddie flushed and stammering.

“I always knew it was me who took your breath away, not your bullshit asthma,” Richie had said with a laugh just this morning, winking at Eddie, never phased by anything it seemed.

Eddie’s upper body collapsed onto the bed; he still clutched Richie’s

hand to his face.

This morning—a typically freezing December morning in Derry, Maine—he'd been bundled up in the four layers his mother always forced him to wear during the winter

(You know what can happen when you go out in the cold and don't stay warm enough, Eddie Bear. Oh, and don't forget your pills.)

as he climbed into Richie's truck for the trek to school.

"Warm enough there, Eds?" Richie had asked with a smirk.

Eddie, feeling strangely childish, had stuck his tongue out at Richie, startling a laugh out of the other boy.

"You know, I can warm you up, too," Richie had said, waggling his eyebrows.

"Oh my god, Richie," Eddie had groaned, feeling that stupid, hated blush of his rising on his cheeks.

"That's how your mom sounded last night."

"Shut up, Richie!" Eddie had turned to grab his seatbelt, but before he could, arms had wrapped around his midsection. Richie had pressed up against Eddie's back, nose in Eddie's hair.

Eddie froze. "I—wh-what are you d-doing?"

"Stuttering is Bill's thing, Eddie. Jesus."

Eddie hadn't been able to listen to what Richie was saying, instead hyper-focused on the feel of Richie cuddled up against him. Richie felt taut and lean, a branding heat against Eddie's body. He jumped when he felt Richie's lips brush against his ear.

"Warm enough, Eds?"

Eddie couldn't speak.

"Cat got your tongue

(*tongue, bite IT's tongue and don't let go*)

my Eddie Spaghetti?"

My...?

Something sparked through the atmosphere, something that made the air feel heavy and tight, something that had Eddie nearly moaning with a want he didn't want to understand but did.

And just like that, the heat was gone as Richie pulled away, nearly drawing a whimper from Eddie's lips. He choked, tugging the seatbelt into place before settling back against the seat with tremors running through him.

Richie had pinched his cheek. "You're so cute, Eds!"

But there had been something in Richie's eyes, hadn't there? Yes, that glint, that unspoken want that had Eddie's toes curling in his shoes.

Richie had stared at Eddie for a few seconds before turning away to pull out of the Kaspbraks' driveway.

Eddie hadn't breathed the entire time.

Eddie stood by the receptionist desk and dialed his home phone number with numb fingers. He was supposed to be home hours ago. His mother was going to—

"Eddie!" Sonia Kaspbrak's voice rang so loudly that he held the phone away from his ear. "Where have you *been*? I was about to call the police!"

"Ma..." Eddie's voice trailed off. All he could see in his mind's eye was Richie lying on that hospital bed a few doors away, silent and broken. He felt like crying again. He shoved the feeling down. "Mom, I-I was in a car accident—"

"What?"

“I’m okay, Mom! But...but Richie isn’t—”

“You were in *his* truck, weren’t you, Eddie? I should have never let you go with that boy. He’s always been trouble, and now *this*—”

“Mom, stop!” Eddie nearly shouted. The sudden silence told him his mother was shocked. “Mom, I-I don’t... Richie *isn’t all right*. He hit his head, and the doctors wouldn’t say if he would wake up, and...and... and—” He felt tears sliding down his cheeks again before he gave into the sobs.

“I’m coming,” Sonia said at length. Eddie felt absurdly grateful.

He knew he should call his friends, but he couldn’t bring himself to dial their numbers. Not yet.

When he tried to call the Tozier residence, there was no answer.

Eddie hurried back into Richie’s room, trying not to let himself hope that he would see Richie’s eyes open.

They weren’t.

Eddie stared at Richie’s limp form for a few seconds, brow dipping lower and lower until he was scowling. He breathed deep through his mouth, tasting that antiseptic stench that hung in the air, that sanitized smell of death. White hot, boiling liquid seemed to shoot through his veins, and he suddenly realized all he could feel was *rage*. How *dare* Richie do this to him? *How fucking dare he?*

“You—you fucking asshole,” Eddie seethed. “You just *had* to try to be the hero, didn’t you?”

(Don’t look at IT, Eds! Look at me!)

“Turning your truck so the semi would hit *your* side and not mine?” Eddie knew Richie had probably saved his life, but he didn’t fucking care. “And now you just get to lay there while I lose my fucking mind over you? I don’t—what if you *die*? What am I supposed to do? Huh? *What the fucking hell am I supposed to do?* Do you know what that will

do to me, with how I feel about you? Do you even *know* how I feel? Of course not! I won't get the chance to tell you if you fucking die!"

Eddie gripped his hair, yanking down as he let out a scream.

"We survived that fucking clown! You don't get to die from a stupid car crash. You just—you *just don't*. It's just—that's just not fair...."

And just like that, the anger whooshed out of Eddie

(*a balloon deflating*)

replaced with a sadness so deep that Eddie felt like he would drown in it. He floundered, lost at sea without Richie to guide him back to shore, like Richie always did.

Who was the one who carried an extra inhaler for him and had shoved it in his mouth after Henry Bowers and co. had locked him in his locker for an entire class period, causing a massive claustrophobic asthma attack?

Richie.

Who was the one who, when Pennywise the Dancing Clown approached the Losers with claws extended, had grabbed Eddie's face and told him to look away at someone else's face for comfort?

Richie.

Who was the one Eddie had clung to after realizing his mom had been lying to him about his illness?

Richie.

Who was the one who saved Eddie over and over and over again without even trying? Had even saved him from dying in a car crash just today?

Was it Richie? Yes. It always was.

Eddie hesitated before stepping up beside Richie's bed. Before he could talk himself out of it, he climbed up on the bed beside Richie,

hesitating for only a moment before he settled himself beside Richie.

Eddie curled into Richie's side, settling his broken arm over Richie's abdomen as he rested his head on the other boy's chest. He raised trembling fingers to Richie's face, ever so softly tracing them over Richie's forehead and cheeks before gently combing Richie's hair.

Suddenly he remembered something from what seemed such a long time ago. A girl—a girl with hair of winter fire, Beverly—had been floating, lost. No one knew what to do to take away the dead light

(the deadlights)

shining from her eyes, to wake her from whatever dream in which she was adrift. But then a shy, new boy in town had stepped up and pressed his lips against hers in a bid against fate. In hopes that true love would awaken those lost in magic sleep. And it had worked.

Eddie bit his lip. This wasn't the sewers; IT wasn't here. There was no magic

(because this isn't some fucking fairytale)

to save Richie.

But maybe—

Eddie sat up, level with the boy who usually towered over him.

"But maybe there *is* magic," he whispered. He leaned forward until Richie's face in all its bruised glory was only a few inches from his own. He looked at the tousled black hair with blood crusted in it—blood shed for Eddie. He looked at the dark circles beneath closed eyes—dark with no sleep from listening to an alcoholic mother smash her poison against walls and family and then getting up to drive Eddie to school in the morning. He looked at the broken nose—a nose usually crinkled with a smile as he found some new way to tease Eddie until he laughed and told Richie to shut up.

Finally he looked at Richie's chapped lips, slightly parted and unmoving.

But still pink.

Eddie dipped down and tilted his head to the side, his eyes fluttering closed before he pressed his lips against Richie's. His heart quivered as he felt their mouths slot into place, fitting with a perfection and ease he'd never known, never allowed himself to know. The moment seemed to last forever, even though it was only a few seconds. Eddie wanted to stay right there forever.

He pulled back slightly, looking up with Richie with tears in his eyes.

"Please come back," he whispered. "I..." He let out a shuddering breath. "I love you."

Eddie waited, watching Richie for any movement.

But there was nothing. No cocked eyebrow, no trembling eyelids, no loud gasp.

A crushing weight seemed to smother Eddie all at once as he slumped forward against Richie's chest, tears leaking from his tightly closed eyes. He wanted to die, and he let himself spiral into his agonizing thoughts, into the pain, blocking out the world. He didn't even care if his mother walked in right then to see her boy pressed up against Richie Trashmouth Tozier.

He didn't know how long he'd been lying there before he noticed fingers moving stiffly through his hair, gently combing through the curls Eddie had let grow. Eddie froze, not daring to hope. Then he lifted his head and locked gazes with Richie's tired brown eyes.

"Richie?" Eddie nearly squeaked.

"Ayup, that's me," Richie whispered, smiling a bit even though it must have hurt. "How's the arm, Eds?"

Eddie promptly burst into tears.

Richie stayed in the hospital for a week. His parents never showed up once, but it didn't matter. Richie had Eddie looking after him nearly

twenty-four hours of the day.

There were times when Mrs. Kaspbrak had to drag her son out of the hospital. She had given up trying to stop him from going; he'd already snuck out of his window once.

When Richie was finally given the seal of approval by the doctors, who were stunned by Richie's recovery, Eddie was there to walk him out the door. The other Losers were on their way.

Richie sighed, tilting his face up to enjoy the cold winter breeze. "Eds?"

"I told you not to call me that," Eddie muttered. "What is it?"

"When I was...asleep, I felt...lost."

Eddie stared at Richie as the other boy stumbled for words. Considering Richie was *never* at a loss for words, Eddie felt a bit alarmed.

"It was like I was being tossed in waves before being pulled down into the ocean. Dark and heavy. But then...but then I heard you. You were so angry. You were crying..."

The world seemed to be slowing down around Eddie. *Richie heard that?*

"You kissed me, didn't you? Just like...just like Ben with Bev. I felt it..." Richie touched his lips with what looked like reverence.

Eddie felt his face burning.

"And then, you told me told me something..."

Eddie's breath quickened. No. No way. Richie had been in a *coma*, for Christ's sake! He couldn't have heard—

"You told me you love me."

Eddie gulped, frozen in place. His lungs felt shriveled and useless, and he wished he had an inhaler in his pocket. He didn't care if his

asthma was bullshit; it felt pretty real right now.

“Eds...Eddie.”

Eddie stared at his feet. After a moment, he saw two converse sneakers step forward. He closed his eyes as Richie lifted his chin with gentle hands.

“Eds, open your eyes.”

He did only to see Richie’s warm brown eyes looking at him. There was that glint, that same unspoken want he’d seen before. But he thought he recognized what it was now. He felt the same heat flooding through his chest. Richie’s eyes softened even more, and Eddie knew Richie had seen that want, had felt and cradled it for maybe as long as Eddie had.

Eddie’s eyes fell closed as Richie leaned toward him. And then they were kissing. In broad daylight in the middle of Derry, but Eddie couldn’t bring himself to give a fuck. Richie Tozier was kissing him!

Eddie felt Richie’s arms wrap around his waist, pulling him closer. Eddie slowly lifted his arms to circle Richie’s neck, careful of his cast.

(lover...not loser)

Richie swiped his tongue across Eddie’s bottom lip. For once in his life, Eddie didn’t think of germs or infection or any of those nasty things as he parted his lips to allow Richie’s tongue into his mouth. The velvet slide of Richie’s tongue against his felt like heaven, and he heard himself moan into Richie’s mouth.

Richie pulled back, leaving Eddie gasping with pink cheeks. Eddie’s trembling lips curved in a smile as Richie rested his forehead against Eddie’s.

“I love you too, Eddie Kaspbrak.”

A pause.

“You know you’re totally my boyfriend now, right?”

Eddie sighed loudly.